

DPC 119

TRANSCRIPT OF DAILY BRIEFING
FRIDAY, JUNE 22, 1979

(ON THE RECORD UNLESS OTHERWISE NOTED)

Mr. Carter: Good afternoon.

We have available in the Press Office the testimony of Matthew Nimetz before the Subcommittee on Trade at the U.S. House of Representatives Committee on Ways and Means. Mr. Nimetz testified on MFN waiver renewal for Romania and Hungary.

I have a sad duty and obligation for me, though I expect, given the nature of this job, a happier one for him. This is Ken Brown's last day with us in the Press Office and in the Press operation. He will be going on to that finer place in the sky where Foreign Service Officers ought to go which is probably not dealing with the press. In any case, it has been a extraordinary two years that Ken has given this place. He's been a first-class Press Officer in every way. And all of us are going to miss him. I just wanted to put that in on the record. (Applause)

Q I think goodbyes to Ken are in order. Just speaking for the unaffiliated correspondents at the State Department, Ken has brought a great sense of verve and good humor whenever he had to stonewall, which was frequent; and we will certainly miss him. I speak on behalf of quite a few of us.

A Thank you, Les.

I have no statements.

Let me say one thing, I have a senior Department officer coming down here in a minute. I don't mind kicking it off on Nicaragua; but as far as details of what's going on OAS right now, if you'll wait a minute, I'll have a guy here for backgrounding on that.

Q Some of us are going to a lunch, so let me try something that maybe you can address.

The Secretary called yesterday for a transition coalition in Nicaragua. Two very quick questions: Does he think Somoza's Liberal Party should be part of the transition? Does he think the Communists should be part of the transition?

A I think that what he called for was representative of all groups with the support of the Nicaraguan people. That has to be self-defining. I'm not going to

try to be inclusive or exclusive on this. Similarly, I'm not going to try to define the nature of what an OAS presence might be. That is precisely what this meeting is for.

Q So if I understand you correctly, you are not answering, responding to, whether Somoza's Liberal Party should be --

A We have always called for inclusion of all democratic factions one way or another. I don't see any reason why that would have changed. I just simply don't want to try to define here, however, for the people in the country who should be included in this government.

Q Can you say whether the United States would be willing to participate in the inter-American force? And would the United States be willing to participate as a member of the special delegation that the Secretary recommended be sent to Nicaragua?

A Let me say that insofar as the nature of our role, if any, and the nature of our suggestions -- final resolutions -- the point of this OAS meeting is to establish answers to both these and a number of other questions. I'm not going to sit here, at this point, and try to say what we would do or even in the absence of requests what we'd be willing to do. I think we'll just have to deal with that as we are currently talking, obviously, on a whole range of subjects such as these; and it's the subject of diplomatic consultations and meetings with other partners in the OAS.

Q It is the Administration's own suggestion for sending a force.

A I hope everybody has their text in front of them and reads the wording, which is fairly careful -- "consider urgently" -- and it is designed to encourage a great deal of consideration, discussion and ultimately resolution of possible steps by the OAS to deal with what we consider to be an urgent situation; and indeed all members do.

Q It is conceivable that you would not have made that recommendation even if you had not already made certain deliberations within the government determining whether or not the United States would be willing to participate in the force that was recommended.

A There's no question that we have discussed this matter at some length inside the United

Q Was the Ambassador the source of those stories?

A I have no idea. I'm not going to try to speak for the source on it. I just can't do it.

Q Hodding, if I could just say that I thought that was a very well-drawn up statement. It was very convincing except this one little item --

Q Ask the question, please.

A Go ahead.

Q Wait a minute, Hodding. I've been interrupted. Would you ask this guy not to interrupt? I've never interrupted him.

A Go.

Q Please.

A No, come on.

Q No, wait a minute. There's another one, Hodding. I do not interrupt other people. I don't want to be interrupted, O.K.?

Did Ambassador Toon himself agree with the President that SALT II is verifiable?

A Did he agree that it's verifiable? He is dealing in facts. He said that it must be verifiable.

Q Did he say that it is --

A I have no idea. You'll have to ask Ambassador Toon about that.

Q Well, you've consulted with Ambassador Toon. Is Toon now saying that in his judgment SALT II is verifiable?

A What he has --

Q Or does he agree with what the New York Times reported Admiral Turner as saying?

A First, the misapprehension about Admiral Turner's views, being such as they are, calls into question other questions that are raised by other people's views on verification -- one.

Two, insofar as a further definition of Ambassador Toon, one of the nice things is that he's available in Moscow, and he's going to be available here. Those questions can be put to him when he arrives.

I mean, really, this is the extent of it.

Q It seems that from your statement, Hodding, you can say that he continues to believe in the SALT II Treaty; but as for verification, at this time, he could not bring himself to say that there is sufficient verification in the treaty. He has to bring himself up to date on that subject.

In other words, the verification issue, according to the words you've given us, in Toon's judgment, is left open at this time.

A The treaty question -- he undoubtedly wants to know more details about verification. He says, however, that the treaty itself -- and this is a central question, and I'm confident that it will be avoided -- he says does not in any way weaken the security position of the United States.

That is his statement.

Q Yes, but the verification issue was still open. You haven't really buttoned up the verification issue. You mentioned it --

A No. What I have here -- I'll go back ON BACKGROUND: The verification issue is not one that naturally has a great deal flowing to it if you're in Moscow. A great deal of it is handled somewhere else. This is a right place to find out about precisely a number of the details of how that is going to be handled. That is what he is going to do.

What is buttoned up is what I just got through saying about his position on the treaty -- which means the overall impact of the treaty, Marvin. Try as you will, he is supporting the treaty.

Q Yes. A lot of people say they're supporting the treaty and then raise 13 amendments.